

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3894

SECTION 1 OF 3 BUENOS AIRES 9835

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDUP

REF: BUENOS AIRES 8232

SUMMARY: THE MOST SPECTACULAR EVENTS IN THE ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS SCENE--THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TWO FRENCH NUNS AND 11 OTHER PERSONS ASSOCIATED IN SOME WAY WITH THE "MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO" MOVEMENT--HAS BEEN REPORTED SEPARATELY (SEE BUENOS AIRES 9420 AND 9715). WHAT FOLLOWS IS A CATCH-ALL RESUME OF OTHER EVENTS WHICH EMBASSY BELIEVES HAVE HUMAN RIGHTS SIGNIFICANCE. OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE WAS PRESIDENT VIDELA'S INTERVIEW WITH THE BRITISH JOURNALISTS PUBLISHED HERE DECEMBER 18 IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED PROSPECTS FOR RELEASING PRISONERS AND IN GENERAL DEFENDED HIS GOVERNMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. WHAT MAY BE ANOTHER HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENT OF IMPORTANCE CANNOT YET BE DISCUSSED: EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN RAISED THAT SOME KIND OF PRISONER RELEASE LIST WILL BE PUBLISHED DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON... IF IN FACT THIS TAKES PLACE THE LIST

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WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY. END SUMMARY.

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to
Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

1. VIDELA INTERVIEW: IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BRITISH NEWSMEN PUBLISHED DEC 18, PRESIDENT VIDELA MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS RELEVANT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND TERRORISM IN ARGENTINA:

(A) VIDELA DENIED HE TOLD PRESIDENT CARTER HE WOULD HAVE "GOOD NEWS" BY CHRISTMAS. HE SAID HE ANSWERED CARTER'S QUESTION ON WHEN THE ANTI-SUBVERSION CAMPAIGN WOULD END BY SAYING HE HOPED THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE PEACE THIS CHRISTMAS. HE HIMSELF HAS SET NO DEADLINES, ONLY OBJECTIVES. "FOR OUR PART, WE HOPE FOR PEACE THIS CHRISTMAS; BUT IF THE OTHER PART, THE SUBVERSIVES, DOES NOT WANT TO COEXIST IN PEACE, THEY WILL GET THE RIGHTFUL RESPONSE."

(B) ASKED ABOUT THREE SPECIFIC CASES, VIDELA REPLIED THAT JACOBO TIMERMAN WAS NOT ARRESTED BECAUSE HE IS AJEW OR A JOURNALIST, BUT BECAUSE OF HIS STILL UNCLARIFIED RELATIONS WITH THE GRAIVER GROUP. TIMERMAN NOW HAS THE DUTY TO PROVE THAT HIS ASSETS WERE RIGHTFULLY ACQUIRED AND NOT RELATED TO GRAIVER FUNDS WHICH WERE PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF SUBVERSIVES. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF AMBASSADOR HIDALGO SOLA WAS CREDITED BY VIDELA TO ENEMIES OF THE GOVERNMENT. QUESTIONED ABOUT THE DETENTION OF CLAUDIA INES GRUMBERG, WHO IS PARALYZED IN HER ARMS AND LEGS, VIDELA SAID THAT TERRORISM IS NOT ONLY THE ACT OF KILLING WITH A WEAPON OR A BOMB, BUT ALSO FOR INCITING IDEAS CONTRARY TO OUR WESTERN AND CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION. THIS COULD POSSIBLY BE THE REASON FOR THE WOMAN'S DETENTION, HE SAID.

(C) THE ARMED FIGHT AGAINST ARMED TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS IS ALMOST AT AN END. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THE END OF THE NEED FOR REPRESSIVE ACTION, BUT THE END OF ARMED WARFARE. ARGENTINE CITIZENRY IS NOT THE VICTIM OF REPRESSION;

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REPRESSION IS DIRECTED AGAINST A MINORITY THAT CANNOT BE CONSIDERED ARGENTINE. EXCESSES MAY RESULT BUT NOT AS A MATTER OF POLICY NOR WITH OUR APPROVAL.

(D) THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PUBLISH A LIST OF DETAINED PERSONS SOON. VIDELA SAID IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO PUBLISH A LIST OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS BECAUSE DISAPPEARANCES "DO NOT ALWAYS MEAN THE PERSON IS DEAD." SOME HAVE ABANDONED SUBVERSION AND MANY OF THESE ARE COLLABORATING WITH THE SECURITY FORCES, PROVIDING INFORMATION. OTHERS HAVE GONE INTO CLANDESTINITY WITHIN THE SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENT; SOME HAVE LEFT THE COUNTRY; SOME HAVE BEEN KILLED AS TRAITORS BY THE

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SUBVERSIVES THEMSELVES; AND OTHERS MAY HAVE BEEN KILLED IN ARMED CONFRONTATIONS MAY HAVE BEEN UNIDENTIFIABLE. VIDELA REITERATED HIS ASMISSION THAT IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT SOME MAY HAVE DISAPPEARED AS A RESULT OF EXCESSIVE REPRESSION, REGRETTABLE INCIDENTS OF THE WAR.

(E) LESS THAN 4,000 PERSONS ARE DETAINED AS SUBVERSIVE DELINQUENTS IN ARGENTINA; MORE THAN HALF OF THEM WERE DETAINED BY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. MOST OF THESE PERSONS ARE UNDER THE JUSTIC SYSTEM, SOME ARE UNDER THE JUSTICE SYSTEM, SOME ARE FULFILLING THEIR SENTENCES AND OTHERS ARE AWAITING THE VERDICT ON THEIR CASES. VIDELA EMPHATICALLY DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF "CONCENTRATION CAMPS" IN ARGENTINA AND SAID DETAINEES ARE NOT KEPT IN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS BEYOND THE TIME NECESSARY FOR INTERROGATION OF PERSONS CAPTURED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AND BEFORE THEY ARE TURNED OVER TO THE PENAL SYSTEM.

2. CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS: ARGENTINE CARDINAL ARAMBURU, CARDINAL PRIMATESTA AND MSGR. ZASPE LUNCHEDED WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA NOV 30 TO PRESENT HIM WITH A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT PREPARED BY THE ARGENTINE BISHOPS CONFERENCE AT ITS RECENTLY CONCLUDED MEETING. NUNCIATURA FIRST SECRETARY MSGR. KEVIN MULLEN (PROTECT) TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT
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NO IMPROVEMENT HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE RELEASED A STATEMENT OF CONCERN OVER HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND DISAPPEARANCES LAST MAY. THE RECENT DOCUMENT INCLUDES THE BISHOPS' CONCERNS OVER THE DETERIORATION IN WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS AND CITES INEQUITIES IN INCOMES AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS. ACCORDING TO MULLEN, THE DOCUMENT, UNLIKE LAST MAY'S GENERAL PRONOUNCEMENT, IS A "LAUNDRY LIST"
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OF PRESENTATIONS BY INDIVIDUAL BISHOPS REGARDING INCIDENTS AND THE SITUATION IN EACH PARISH. SINCE THEIR EARLIER PUBLISHED STATEMENT BROUGHT NO FAVORABLE RESULTS, THE BISHOPS DECIDED NOT TO RELEASE THE NOV "AIDE-MEMOIRE" BUT TO DELIVER IT TO VIDELA WITH COPIES TO EACH JUNTA MEMBER IN THE HOPE THAT THEIR CONCERN WOULD FILTER DOWN TO THE MILITARY WORKING LEVELS. MULLEN SAID CONFIDENTIALLY THAT VIDELA'S RESPONSE TO THE BISHOPS' AIDE-MEMOIRE WAS THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THEIR GRIEVANCES AND ONLY WISHED HE HAD THE POWER TO CORRECT THEM. THE THREE BISHOPS MET WITH CONFERENCE MEMBERS DEC 19 TO REPORT THE RESULTS OF THE VIDELA LUNCHEON.

3. MASSERA AND HUMAN RIGHTS -- ONE VIEW. ACCORDING TO A WIRE SERVICE STORY DATED WASHINGTON AND PUBLISHED IN LA NATION DEC 20, THE COUNCIL ON HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS (COHA) HAS DECLARED THAT THE ARGENTINE NAVY, UNDER ADMIRAL MASSERA, HAS BECOME THE ARGENTINE MILITARY BRANCH MOST RECEPTIVE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. COHA DIRECTOR LAURENCE BIRNS IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THERE ARE PROOFS THAT THE NAVY HAS REQUESTED THE RELEASE OF JACOBO TIMERMAN BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM. (COMMENT: THIS DEVELOPMENT IN "HUMAN RIGHTS" MAY IN FACT BEAR MORE CLOSELY ON THE WELL KNOWN VIDELA-MASSERA RIVALRY,

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AND IS ESPECIALLY INTERESTING IN TERMS OF "JUNTA POLITICS".)

4. LABOR LAWYER DISAPPEARS. THE LAWYER FOR THE AIRLINE PILOTS UNION, DR. IBERO BERENGUER, DISAPPEARED EARLY IN DECEMBER ALONG WITH TWO NOTARIES PUBLIC AFTER MOST OF THE PILOTS OF STATE-OWNED AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS GAVE NOTICE OF THEIR INTENT TO RESIGN FROM THEIR EMPLOYMENT ON ACCOUNT OF A WAGE DISPUTE. PRESSURE FROM THE UNION AND THE ASSOCIATION OF NOTARIES RESULTED IN THE RELEASE OF THE TWO NOTARIES FROM DETENTION BY SECURITY AUTHORITIES. LABOR SOURCES BELIEVE

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THAT BERENGUER IS IN THE CUSTODY OF SECURITY FORCES, BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED HIS DETENTION OR ANY KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WHEREABOUTS. THE LABOR CONFLICT IN THE AIRLINES APPEARED TO WORSEN MOMENTARILY AS A RESULT OF THE DISAPPEARANCES, BUT THE PILOTS DECIDED IN THE END TO WITHDRAW THEIR THREAT TO RESIGN AND THE PROSPECTS FOR A SETTLEMENT OF THE WAGE ISSUE ARE SAID TO BE GOOD.

5. GUAGNINI DISAPPEARANCE. THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD DEC 22 REPORTED THAT LUIS RODOLFO GUAGNINI, DESCRIBED AS AN INDEPENDENT CORRESPONDENT FOR INTER PRESS NEWS AGENCY AND BRITISH AND SPANISH PUBLICATIONS, WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM HIS HOME DEC 21 IN A POLICE CAR ALONG WITH DORA CARMEN SALAS ROMERO AND HER CHILDREN WHO ALSO LIVED THERE. SALAS ROMERO'S CHILDREN WERE REPORTEDLY SUBSEQUENTLY LEFT AT THEIR GRANDPARENTS' HOME BY THE PATROL CAR AND THE GRANDPARENTS WERE TOLD THEY WOULD HEAR FROM THEIR DAUGHTER IN THREE OR FOUR DAYS, ACCORDING TO GUAGNINI'S MOTHER. THE BRITISH EMBASSY HAS BEEN QUERIED ON THE CASE BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE. IT HAS NO FURTHER DETAILS ON THE ABDUCTION EXCEPT THAT IT UNDERSTANDS GUAGNINI MAY HAVE BEEN IN FACT "CONNECTED WITH TERRORIST GROUPS" AND RATHER SURPRISINGLY CHOSE TO REMAIN IN ARGENTINA DESPITE BEING A RATHER OBVIOUS TARGET FOR A SECURITY

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OPERATION. THE BRITISH EMBASSY DOES NOT INTEND TO MAKE ANY REPRESENTATIONS ON THE CASE. EMBASSY SOURCES HAVE NO DEROGATORY INFORMATION ON GUAGNINI.

6. HIGH INTEREST CASES.

(A) JACOBO TIMERMAN'S LAWYER TELLS US HE EXPECTS A DECISION BY THE COURT OF APPEALS ON TIMERMAN'S CHALLENGE TO HIS CONTINUED DETENTION UNDER THE PODER EJECUTIVO NACIONAL. THE ATTORNEY IS NOT OPTIMISTIC, HOWEVER, THAT THE APPEALS COURT WILL USE THE TIMERMAN CASE TO LIMIT THE EXECUTIVE'S P.E.N. DETENTION AUTHORITY.

(B) HUMAN RIGHTS LEADER AND TEACHER'S UNION HEAD ALFREDO BRAVO CONTINUES TO BE HELD UNDER THE P.E.N. WITHOUT CHARGES. THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ARE CONTINUING IN THEIR CAMPAIGN OF PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENTS AND LETTER WRITING SEEKING BRAVO'S RELEASE. IN MID-DECEMBER JOHN THOMPSON, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHING ORGANIZATIONS, WAS

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GIVEN SPECIAL PERMISSION BY INTERIOR MINISTER HARGUINDEGUY TO VISIT BRAVO IN HIS LA PLATA PRISON.

(C) AS REPORTED SEPTELS GUILLERMO VOGLER WAS RELEASED FROM EXECUTIVE DETENTION ON NOV 22 AND ALLOWED TO PROCEED TO THE UNITED STATES.

(D) THE PROTESTANT FACULTY OF PARIS AWARDED AN HONORARY DEGREE IN ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY TO DR. MAURICIO LOPEZ, A LEADING ARGENTINE PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN AND FORMER OFFICIAL OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WHO HAS BEEN DISAPPEARED SINCE JAN 1, 1977. (COMMENT: ALSO IN LATE NOVEMBER, 20 "PROMINENT INTELLECTUALS" PRESENTED TO ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE ANCHONRENA IN PARIS A PETITION REQUESTING ARGENTINE WRITER RODOLFO WALSH'S IMMEDIATE RELEASE. AMONG THOSE REPORTED TO HAVE SIGNED THE PETITION WERE EUGENE [REDACTED]
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IONESCO, JEAN-LOUIS SERVAN SHRIBER, MARY MACCARTHY AND ROLAND BARTHES AND MICHELE FOUCAULD.)

7. HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS' ACTIVITIES.

(A) MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP "FAMILIARES DE DETENIDOS Y DESAPARECIDOS" HAVE LAUNCHED A "GRANDMOTHERS GROUP" TO TRY AND LOCATE THE CHILDREN THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN BORN TO THEIR DISAPPEARED PREGNANT DAUGHTERS. SECURITY FORCES IN ARGENTINA DO NOT TAKE SMALL CHILDREN DURING OPERATIONS BUT THERE ARE CASES REPORTED OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF PREGNANT WOMEN. THE "FAMILIARES" GROUP HAS DOCUMENTED 13 CASES OF DISAPPEARED PREGNANT WOMEN. IT HAS BEGUN A PROCESS OF FILING HABEAS CORPUS PETITIONS ON BEHALF OF THESE WOMEN'S INFANTS AND ARE TRYING TO INTEREST FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN THIS ASPECT
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OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISAPPEARANCE PROBLEM IN ARGENTINA.

(B) THE PRE CHRISTMAS PERIOD HAS BEEN A VERY ACTIVE ONE FOR MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS IN ARGENTINA. THE "PERMANENT ASSEMBLY", THE "MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO" AND THE "FAMILIARES DE DETENIDOS Y DESAPARECIDOS" ALL HAVE LAUNCHED YEAREND EFFORTS TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS REGARDING REPORTED DISAPPEARANCES AND THE CONDITIONS IN PENAL INSTITUTIONS WHERE POLITICAL PRISONERS/SUBVERSIVE ARE HELD. ON DEC 14 THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO HAD PLANNED A MAJOR EFFORT DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON PRIOR TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF 13 OR SO OF THEIR SUPPORTERS DURING THE WEEK OF DEC 11. ON DEC 10 AN ALMOST FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN LA NACION PETITIONED THE GOVERNMENT ON THE DISAPPEARANCE ISSUE WAS SIGNED BY 834 MOTHERS. (AN ADDITIONAL SHEET OF SIGNATURES FOR THAT PETITION AS WELL AS \$250 OF FUNDS COLLECTED TO PAY FOR THE ADVERTISEMENT WERE TAKEN DURING THE ABDUCTION OF 11 MOTHER'S GROUP SUPPORTERS AT THE SANTA CRUZ CHURCH ON DEC 8.) THE MOTHERS HAD PLANNED A MAJOR TURNOUT AT THEIR USUAL THURSDAY AFTERNOON DEMONSTRATION ON DEC 15, BUT THE ABDUCTION OF MEMBERS OF THE MOTHER'S GROUP HAD A CHILLING EFFECT ON ATTENDANCE, WHICH ACCORDING TO ONE OF THE MOTHERS TURNED OUT TO BE "ABOUT AVERAGE". THE MOTHERS ARE NOW

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TALKING ABOUT HOLDING OPEN PRESS CONFERENCE, AND ARE STILL DISCUSSING THEIR PLANS FOR A CHRISTMAS EVE VIGIL IN THE PLAZA DE MAYO.

(C) THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY WOUND UP ITS ACTIVITIES FOR 1977 WITH A MAJOR MEETING WHICH WAS LIMITED TO 100 PERSONS IN ORDER TO AVOID POLICE DISRUPTIONS. SECURITY OFFICIALS ATTENDED THE MEETING BUT DID NOT HARASS ITS PARTICIPANTS. THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES ON DISAPPEARANCES OPERATIONS,

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PRISON CONDITIONS AND RIGHT OF OPTION ALL PRESENTED REPORTS. METHODIST BISHOP GATTINONI SUMMARIZED THE ASSEMBLY'S WORK FOR THE YEAR. SEVERAL PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE COMMENTED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS AND OPEN CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT WERE THE MOST FRANK THAT THEY HAD OBSERVED DURING THE TENURE OF THIS MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

8. GOVERNMENT REHABILITATION PROGRAM. AS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE MONTONERO AND ERP TERRORISTS TO SURRENDER VOLUNTARILY, THE ARMY ORGANIZED A PRESS VISIT TO A REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE MEDIA IN LATE NOVEMBER. THE JOURNALISTS WERE FLOWN BY HELICOPTER TO A RANCH LESS THAN AN HOUR'S FLYING TIME FROM BUENOS AIRES. THERE THEY MET WITH TWO FORMER TERRORISTS COUPLES WHO PRAISED THE REHABILITATION PROGRAM. THE NEWSMEN REPORTED THEY WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE FACILITIES THEY SAW. THE TERRORISTS SURRENDER PROGRAM RECEIVES FREQUENT COVERAGE IN THE ARGENTINE PRESS WITH ACCOUNTS OF PRISONERS HAVING THEIR SENTENCES REDUCED BECAUSE THEY VOLUNTARILY SURRENDERED. THE PAPERS PERIODICALLY PRINT THE STRAIGHTFORWARD RULES REGARDING A SURRENDER, WHICH ALLOWS A FORMAL REGISTRATION OF THE SURRENDERING TERRORIST TO ASSURE HIM OR HER THAT HE WILL NOT "DISAPPEAR".

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9. THE AISC "LIST OF 7,500". ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP HEAD ARLIA TOLD EMBOFF IN EARLY DECEMBER THAT THE GOA "DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE LIST." HE MENTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT THE LIST IS BEING ANALYZED BY TWO STAFF MEMBERS OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S LAST PUBLIC WORD ON THE LIST WAS FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES' COMMENT IN EARLY DECEMBER TO THE PRESS THAT THE LIST WAS TURNED OVER BY THE US EMBASSY IN A GESTURE OF COOPERATION WITH ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES. (BUENOS AIRES 8958.)

10. JEHOVAH WITNESSES. THE JEHOVAH WITNESS HAVE NOT PROGRESSED IN THEIR LEGAL SKIMISHES OVER THE RIGHT OF THEIR CHILDREN TO ATTEND SCHOOL WITHOUT HAVING TO SALUTE THE FLAG, AND THEIR SONS' REFUSALS TO DO MILITARY SERVICE. CONTRARY TO THE STATEMENT MADE BY UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO ASSISTANCE SECRETARY TODMAN AND DERIAN, THE SUPREME COURT HAS NOT HANDED DOWN A DECISION REGARDING THE VALIDITY OF THE JUNTA'S DECREE BANNING THE JEHOVAH WITNESSES' PRACTICE OF RELIGION AND PUBLICATION IN ARGENTINA. AN AMERICAN JEHOVAH

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WITNESSES LEADER, CHARLES EISENHOWER, HIMSELF APPEARLING A CONVICTION AS AN ACCESSORY TO THE CRIME OF A YOUNG CORELIGIONIST'S REFUSAL TO SERVE IN THE ARMY, EXPECTS THE SUPREME COURT DECISION SOON.

11. ICEM HEAD VISITS ARGENTINA. JOHN THOMAS, HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON EUROPEAN MIGRATION, VISITED BUENOS AIRES DEC 5 TO 7. MR THOMAS HELD MEETINGS WITH THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND WITH OFFICIALS OF THE US EMBASSY AND INTERNATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS BASED HERE. THOMAS' LOW--KEY APPROACH FOCUSED ON TWO ISSUES, TO FIRST DISCUSS ICEM'S DIFFICULTIES IN ATTRACTING SKILLED EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS TO ARGENTINA GIVEN THE LOW AND DECREASING REAL WAGE SCALES IN THE COUNTRY AND, SECONDLY, TO OFFER ICEM'S SERVICES TO THE GOA TO ASSIST IN A RIGHT OF OPTION EXECUTIVE DETAINEE RELEASE PROGRAM. EMBASSY OFFICERS BELIEVE THOMAS MADE HIS POINTS

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WELL, AND THAT HIS OBSERVATIONS ON POSSIBILITIES FOR ICEM'S WORKING HERE TO RESETTLE RELEASED PRISONERS IS WORTH FOLLOWING UP.

12. RIGHT OF OPTION. THE ARGENTINE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM FOR ITS EXECUTIVE DETAINEES HAS NOT YET GOTTEN OFF THE GROUND. ONLY ONE MEMBER OF THE GENERAL OFFICER INTER SERVICE REVIEW BOARD HAS BEEN APPOINTED PUBLICLY TO DATE. THE ITALIAN, SPANISH AND ISRAELI EMBASSIES DUE TO THEIR LIBERAL DUAL NATIONALITY LAWS HAVE ISSUED SOMEWHAT OVER 50 CERTIFICATES COMBINED. MANY FAMILIES HAVE SUSPENDED THEIR "RIGHT OF OPTION" EFFORTS IN HOPES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL RELEASE THEIR RELATIVES DURING THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON. THOSE DISAPPOINTED WILL PROBABLY RESUME THEIR EFFORTS.

13. THE PEN LISTS: THE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S WEEKLY LIST OF PERSONS ARRESTED AND RELEASED UNDER PEN HAS NOT APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PRESS THE LAST TWO SATURDAYS (DEC 10 AND 17). EARLIER REPORTS SHOW 10 PERSONS WERE ARRESTED (DEC 4); 50 WERE ARRESTED AND 20 WERE RELEASED AND TWO PERSONS--LUCIANO DE GATICA AND EDUARDO HORACIO--WERE AUTHORIZED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY (NOV 26); 4 WERE ARRESTED AND 22 RELEASED (NOV 12); AND 8 WERE ARRESTED AND 22 RELEASED (NOV 5).
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